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Questions About The CIA

Though President Kennedy properly takes the responsibility for the Cuban fiasco, the Central Intelligence Agency is being attacked from every quarter as the direct cause of the tragedy. If the post-mortems are correct, the role of this agency in enacting United States policy and its effectiveness as gatherer and interpreter of information require immediate examination.

As the Cuban story unfolds, rumors and accusations must be nailed down. The ugly story now taking shape is that it was the CIA that masterminded and timed the ill-starred invasion, working in ignorance of the amount of Soviet help Castro had at hand and rejecting suggestions that the invasion be preceded by a softening up program of espionage, minor landings, and instructions to the Cuban people. There are charges that the CIA refused help to some important anti-Castro groups and kept ex-Batista personnel in its training groups. One report states that a number of key Cuban leaders knew nothing of the invasion until after it happened, but that some 100 Castro agents were at large in Miami, known to the CIA, and must have known about it in advance.

If half of this is true, this was indeed a monumental bungle. And if the CIA is as unreliable as all this indicates, it is a

blessing to find out about it now.

President Kennedy's decisions in this matter have come as a continuation of policy begun in the Eisenhower regime: this policy recognized the intolerable danger of the Castro regime and the deadly time factor involved as Soviet roots took hold in Cuba.

If there has been disagreement within the Kennedy administration about how this danger should be met, this is normal in the face of a most difficult situation, and the President has readily assumed the task of making the final decisions. But if a vital resource upon which the Executive must rely turns out to be misleading, this is a cause for national concern. No information is better than the wrong information.

As the President consults, ponders, and reshapes policy in the continuing Cuban crisis, he faces the vital necessity of examining and testing every resource upon which he might have expected to be able to depend unquestioningly. The middle of a stream is a difficult locale for this, but there is no choice. We cannot go ahead until our equipment is in working order; we may have to retreat.

But the goal remains the same. The United States is going to see to it that Castro and Communism are uprooted in Cuba. It is going to be much harder than we thought.